

Testimony of

Diane Garofalo

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Before the

Education Committee

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Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and members of the Education Committee.

As a teacher of 32 years who loved my job for more than 25 of those years, I feel these changes are critical. Teaching has changed from a wonderful profession filled with respect from parents, and eager children, and caring supportive, administrators to a challenging, frustrating, lonely, disappointing, and often impossible job. Today, I am exhausted every day by the lack of respect for my profession and opinion, constant blame by parents who refuse to/cannot parent, and students who know nothing about taking responsibility for their behavior and actions. Without respect, students ready to learn, parents who trust our decisions, and administrators who provide an environment where successful teaching is possible. Planning time is never enough as it is, cutting it back is unfair and counterproductive. Four year olds in Kindergarten is inappropriate and I say this as a former K teacher and a mother of 4 who are products of the CT school system Burnout is impossible to avoid and I hear this from amazing, vibrant, creative young teachers - passionate about doing a great job but met with obstacles every day. I also urge you to support the bills currently asking for better retirement options, full Social Security benefits including those of a spouse etc. Younger teachers and those approaching retirement are horrified that they sacrifice so much to teach the students they care so much about for a retirement that is a punishment for their dedication. Please show support for what teachers do and mean. Please show respect for the very difficult job that teaching has become. Please show respect for students and your own children and grandchildren by providing the best possible environment for them to play, learn, grow, and succeed. I testify today in support of House Bill 6884. This bill takes important steps toward addressing the educator shortage in Connecticut, showing educators that theirs is a respected profession, and ensuring that our classrooms and schools can provide the best possible education for our students. It is Sunday, so I need to go back to correcting journals and planning for the week ahead. It never stops.

Thank you.

Diane Garofalo

